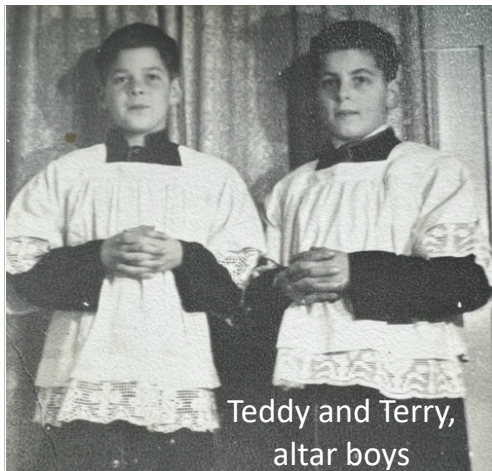


We are all now accustomed to The Ted Show, where catering supremo Ted McNamara produces platters of delectables for hungry Bridge players. However it really began as The Teddy and Terry Show, back in Warrnambool in 1945. It had been a tradition in the McNamara clan to name the firstborn Edward, ever since they settled there in the 1850s. But when what is now termed a 'baby bump' turned out to be twins, papa alliteratively decreed the second born should be Terrence. When their sister was born some years later, she avoided the horrors of being called Tessy or Tilly, becoming Anne-Marie.

Food dominated family fortunes. Ted's father was a butcher and his mother came from several generations of successful grocers. The couple then ran a general store in Penshurst until the prospect of becoming a hotelier appealed to papa. They ran Melbourne's Richmond Club hotel, where young Ted started serving the punters in the bar at the tender age of 12.

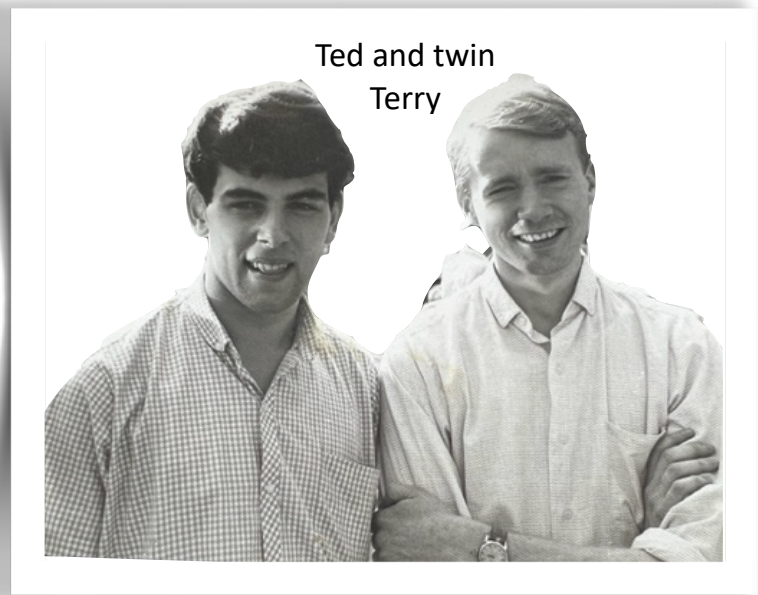


In those days the intoxicatingly mighty Carlton & United did not entirely rule the roost. Richmond Brewery produced its own brand of booze, which was duly passed across the bar by Our Ted. Life was good. And then of course, life became difficult. The owners of the brewery and hotel freehold convinced them, as licensees, to sign up for another term, promising that he and his family would never sell out to CUB. But then the brewery owner died, and guess what, his family sold to Carlton & United.

Vive la difference was dead. The McNamara watering hole went down the gurgler, Ted's mother died because of all the stress and as a result he became the family cook.

Sustenance somehow still ruled in the world of Ted, who took a job as a clerk at what was then called the Australian Dairy Produce Board. 37 years later, head of Human Resources, he retired, after the Board had reinvented itself several times and finally decided to be Dairy Australia.

That 37-year career was interrupted by something called the Vietnam War conscription programme. Top sportsman Terry escaped the draft, studious sibling Ted did not. He spent a year under canvas — and has absolutely detested the idea of camping ever since.



Stationed at Vung Tau, he was involved in Air Despatch, transferring foodstuffs (there's that word again) and munitions, howitzers, etc., from aircraft to helicopters. This involved balancing on top of a platform comprising huge meshed loads of supplies to hook them onto Chinook helicopters (themselves creating rather disturbing downdraughts) as they hovered above — all the while under the threat of mortar bombing.

After the battle of Long Tan, which took the lives of 18 Aussie soldiers with 24 wounded, Air Despatch was involved in recovering the bodies and then loading their coffins, as well as the wounded.

In those days Our Ted was deeply religious and a regular at the church — a facility shared by the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and sometimes Presbyterian faiths. While the Catholic Padre

ministered to the troops, he was also a key figure in the local area, ministering to the many North Vietnamese refugee faithful, but his French sounded *très Australienne*, and also he needed a driver. Air Despatch handed over Ted, whose French was pretty good, driving ditto. So instead of teetering on loads under hovering choppers, Ted became driver and sometime translator.

Thankfully avoiding mortars, he made it home in one piece and returned to the welcoming arms of the Dairy Board. Attracted to an Air Force career, he applied, was accepted and went to hand in his resignation — which was firmly refused. Instead, his salary was immediately raised and he was given an intriguing new role helping to expand throughout South-east Asia, in response to the British swing towards the European Common Market. Based in Hong Kong, the Board built multi-million dollar milk factories in Thailand, Jakarta, Manila and Cambodia,

sending over Australian dried skim milk powder and butter oil (ghee) to produce sweetened condensed milk. Ted helped to supply raw materials and to recruit and manage engineers and technical people setting up the plants and showing local residents how to run them.

The Ted Show also starred frequently at the Board's Christmas pageants, where gentlemen often appeared in tutus. We have photographic evidence of his fabled performance heading the cast singing 1930s hit *Nobody Loves a Fairy when She's Forty*. Sadly we have no photos of his version of *Snow White*.

All good things come to an end .. the Board then went slightly pear-shaped, with a new British CEO who lasted five years, wrecked the Asian businesses and ended up the subject of a Senate malpractice enquiry, with Our Ted hovering in the wings, assisting the Senators.

Over the subsequent years, through the hiring of hundreds and the retrenchment of hundreds and negotiating workplace agreements with recalcitrant and feisty unions, keeping calm and carrying on was Ted's mantra. He finally accepted a very golden handshake to retire in 1999; but with his Monash Master's degree in industrial relations our hero was looking to his next challenge.

On the home front, in 1976 he had met Sydney electronics sales whizz Leon. They have been together ever since, living in Richmond in their Melbourne days. With the Dairy Board behind them, Leon correctly diagnosed that The Ted Show and retirement did not go well together. After six months consulting for Southern Health on nursing requirements for their three hospitals in Melbourne he was at a loose end.



*Nobody loves a fairy when she's forty,
Nobody loves a fairy when she's old.
She may still have a magic power,
But that is not enough,
They like their bit of magic from a younger bit of stuff.
When once your silver star has lost its glitter,
And your tinsel looks like rust instead of gold.
Your fairy days are ending,
When your wand has started bending,
Nobody loves a fairy when she's old.*

Returning from a marvellous trip to Egypt he saw advertised that the Melbourne Zoo needed an HR contractor — they asked him to start the next day. The organisation included the Healesville Sanctuary and Werribee Open Range Zoo; their systems were from The Ark, but thankfully the animals were not.

The Zoo loudly applauded the Ted Show. He then became Director of HR, working to improve the relationship between management and zookeepers. Melbourne Zoo was their only employer in Victoria, and their union was very strong. Calm and carry on Ted was in charge of industrial relations, enduring some amazing encounters. From his reminiscences it sounds as if keepers are a very unusual breed. The fellow in charge of an overstocked cage of finches used a tennis racquet to reduce their numbers. A bird keeper responsible for hand-rearing a macaw chick suddenly decided it was time the chick looked after itself. As a result the \$15,000 bundle of feathers fell off the proverbial perch. (Fire the keeper? Here comes the union again.)

Code Red was the alarm signal when an animal had escaped. Just on closing time Reception rang the office asking if there was an event on, involving someone dressed in a gorilla costume. When the answer came back as NO, they rang the gorilla keeper, asking if she had counted her primates. YES was the answer, we have nine. Have you counted them recently? OH, was the answer, only eight. Channelling King Kong, the enterprising primate had swung on the low (errant gardener had forgotten to trim it — here comes the union again) branch of a tree over the wall, and was wandering around near the main gate. The bewildered gorilla ended up on the roof of the elephant enclosure, enticed down with treats. Ted says orangutans were professional escapees and the Zoo even had a red panda do a runner, into nearby parkland where it was found by an unsuspecting jogger.

Although we did see a photograph of Ted with an elephant, there's none with a hippopotamus, which is strange when you consider The Ted Show's frequent performance (in French) of the children's classic *L'Hippotame*. He rather likes to follow it with a lusty rendition of *La Marseillaise*, and endeavoured to do so when appearing on Eddie McGuire's *Millionaire Hot Seat*. McGuire objected to the anthem, as it was Brisbane Lions' theme song (he prefers *Good Old Collingwood Forever*). The hippo went down a treat but no prize money ensued.





Bridge Club sausage rolls being finessed

In 2012 Ted retired for good, eventually selling their home in Richmond — a house he had bought in 1980, its value multiplying very satisfactorily into seven figures by the time he sold.

They moved to Noosa in 2015, settling at Noosa Waters, with Ted promptly joining the Bridge Club, where he is now a member of the Committee, as well as a very generous provider of wonderful food.

We just have to get him into a tutu singing *La Marseillaise* — let's put in an order for our next Christmas party.

by Susie Osmaston